



PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD of CALIFORNIA
1418 HOWE AVENUE, SUITE 16, SACRAMENTO, CA 95825-3204
TELEPHONE: (916) 263-2550



INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST OR PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT EXAMINATION AND/OR LICENSURE

ALL REQUIRED ITEMS ON THE CHECK SHEET MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION

Use the left column on the check sheet to check off the items as you complete them. (Keep the check sheet for your personal reference). **Within thirty (30) days of receipt of your application an acknowledgment letter will be mailed.** This letter will identify any outstanding documents necessary to complete your application. All documents received subsequent to receipt of the initial application will be acknowledged by mail. No information regarding the status of your application will be disclosed over the telephone. All inquiries regarding the status of your application must be submitted in writing. An application is complete only upon receipt, by the Board, of all required forms, documents, and payment of the appropriate fees. Your cooperation is needed to permit the Board's staff adequate time to process your application.

All applications for examination and/or licensure are subject to continuous review until the license is issued. Passing the national examination does not guarantee licensure.

All applicants for licensure are required to take and pass both the national examination and the examination on the laws and regulations related to the practice of physical therapy in California. Those applicants who are applying by endorsement and who have passed the national physical therapy examination will be scheduled only for the examination on the laws and regulations related to the practice of physical therapy.

NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINATION & CALIFORNIA LAW EXAMINATION

The National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) and the California Law Examination (CLE) for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants is only offered on computer. Computer based testing will be offered in various locations throughout California as well as all other states in the United States. A [study guide for the CLE](#) will be provided upon approval to take the examination. However, the Board does not have study material for the NPTE nor does it endorse courses.

For more detailed information regarding computer based testing, refer to the information provided in this packet titled "[Questions About the Computerized National Physical Therapy Examinations](#)."

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Disabled applicants requiring special accommodations must complete the [D1 Form](#) and return the completed form with your application to the Board. An authorized professional must complete the D1 Form. Question number seven (7) on the application regarding the need for disability accommodations must be answered by all applicants.

LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT

Applicants applying from another state must contact the [Federation of State Physical Therapy Boards](#). Refer to the Score Registration and Transfer Request Application included with this application and request the scores to be sent directly to the Board. Please be aware each state may have a different passing score.

Applicants applying by endorsement must [contact all states](#) in which a license was ever (active or inactive) held and provide the Board with a Letter of Good Standing/Certificate of Endorsement. Some states may require a processing fee for the Letter of Good Standing/Certificate of Endorsement.

FOREIGN EDUCATED APPLICANTS

Applicants that have attended a non-approved foreign college or university must have their educational credentials evaluated by an approved Credential Evaluation Service (see check sheet for listing of approved evaluation services). Request a Subject Breakdown of your education from the evaluation service. The evaluation is required to determine whether your physical therapy education is degree equivalent as required in section 2653 of the Business and Professions Code. Your application may be denied if the evaluation service does not deem your education to be equivalent in level and purpose to a bachelor of science in physical therapy as offered by accredited colleges and universities in the United States.

The evaluation must be sent directly to the Board from the evaluation service and be completed specifically for California. The evaluation will be reviewed by the Board at one of their [regularly scheduled meetings](#). The Board meetings are typically scheduled for February, May, August and October. This schedule is subject to change.

After successful completion of both the national examination and the examination on the laws and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy, you must complete a period of clinical service under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed by the Board which does not exceed nine months in a location approved by the Board, in a manner satisfactory to the Board. During the period of clinical service and until you are licensed as a physical therapist you shall be identified as a “[physical therapist license applicant](#).”

FINGERPRINT CARDS ([Email to Request Fingerprint Cards](#))

The Board requires each candidate for licensure to submit his/her fingerprints on the enclosed fingerprint cards. **Do not send fingerprint cards to Department of Justice.** Fingerprint cards must accompany the application. You should take extra precautions to make sure that the fingerprints are clear. Smudged prints will be rejected by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). **No license will be issued** until all information from the DOJ and the FBI has been received. Therefore it is critical that your fingerprints are transferred to the card(s) properly.

The completed fingerprint cards will be forwarded to the DOJ and the FBI for classification and criminal record check. Any discrepancies between information received from the DOJ and the FBI and the applicant's information may result in **denial** of the application.

The DOJ and the FBI require that fingerprint cards be submitted **unfolded**. **The average processing time for the DOJ and FBI background check is 16 weeks.**

Applicants **MUST** have fingerprints affixed to each fingerprint card. Fingerprints can be taken at a local office of DOJ, law enforcement agency, or Department of Motor Vehicles Field Office. We suggest that you call for cost and to arrange for a convenient time.

FRONT OF CARD: Personal information **MUST** be typed or printed in **BLACK INK** by the applicant. State your complete name, any aliases (maiden name, if applicable), driver's license number, social security number, complete physical description, and date and place of birth. Sign the card and have the official who took your fingerprints sign and date the card. Please leave the boxes marked OCA, FBI and SID blank, as well as the line which states “date fingerprints submitted.”

BACK OF CARD: Enter your residence address. If fingerprints are rejected, they will have to be re-taken and re-submitted. You may be required to submit additional fingerprint cards due to rejection of DOJ and/or FBI. Common reasons for rejection are: **too much ink** (A thin and even layer of ink should be applied to inking surfaces. Fingers should be clean and dry. Do not apply excessive pressure when inking or printing.), **insufficient ink** (Do not ink fingers twice on the same area of the inking slab without re-rolling ink. Check pads and inkless systems for dryness and chemical deterioration.), **impressions blurred or smudged** (Maintain firm contact of finger on inking and printing surfaces and complete roll in one continuous motion. Do not press down or allow finger to slip. If excessive perspiration is present, wipe each finger individually before inking.), **fingers not fully rolled and inked** (Roll the fingers from nail to nail and include the crease of the first joint in the impression.), **impressions are not black ink** (Use accepted white card stock. Check fingerprinting pads and inkless systems for dryness and chemical deterioration. Acceptable fingerprints must be black and permanent.), **improper placement of fingerprints** (The fingerprint impressions must be placed within the proper box indicated for each finger or plain impression. Placement errors include: hands reversed, fingers out-of-sequence, one finger printed twice, one hand printed twice, plain impressions reversed and printing outside of the designated box.) and **fingerprint impression not centered** (Due to the automation of our fingerprint files, it is critical that the fingerprint impression be placed in the center of the fingerprint box as illustrated below.)

NOTE: Fingerprints may be difficult to obtain if age, occupational wear, or disease have caused ridge deterioration. Careful washing of the hands with soap and warm water, rubbing fingers with Vaseline or waterless hand cleaner, and wiping before printing will often produce better fingerprints. The reason for missing impression(s) must be stated on the fingerprint card. Example: amputated fingers must be indicated “AMP”. If fingers are not amputated, attach an explanation to the card giving the reason for missing fingerprints.

CONVICTIONS/SUBSTANCE ABUSE Authority: [B&P Section 493]

When reviewing prior convictions or disciplinary actions a descriptive written explanation of the circumstances surrounding the convictions(s) is required by the applicant to be included with your application. The Board reviews whether the violation of the code, crime, or act is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a licensee. Other factors considered are the nature and severity of the acts or crime; the time that has elapsed since the commission of the acts/crimes; and the extent to which the applicant has complied with any terms or conditions of probation imposed.

The Board receives a printout on each applicant of criminal convictions from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the California's Department of Justice (DOJ). An applicant's dishonest statement concerning the applicant's criminal history may lead to denial of the application based on that dishonest statement alone, even if the applicant has been rehabilitated with respect to past criminal convictions.

To expedite the processing of your application, if you answered "YES" to question 16, submit certified true copies of all applicable arrest and court records and legal documents regarding convictions, final disposition and order, letters of compliance from probation officers, letters from substance abuse program counselors verifying successful completion of a substance abuse program, evidence of current participation of a personal recovery program (such as Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous) and other recovery support and relapse prevention groups.

Furthermore, you are required to submit documentation of substance assessment discharge records, intake/exit interviews and summaries of counselors notes, or similar types of evaluations from the program you attended.

A conviction following a plea of nolo contendere is a conviction and must be disclosed.

If your plea or verdict has been dismissed pursuant to [Section 1203.4](#) of the California Penal Code, [Section 2661](#), Business and Professions Code, requires you to disclose the conviction on your application.

SIGNATURE UNDER THE PENALTY OF PERJURY

All documentation requested within this application is mandatory. Failure to provide any of the requested information may delay the processing of your application. Each applicant must sign under penalty of perjury that all information contained within the application and documentation submitted are true and correct. Any statements provided that are determined to be false (perjured) may result in the denial of licensure.

ABANDONMENT OF LICENSURE APPLICATION

Title 16, Chapter 13.2, Section 1398.21 of the California Code of Regulations pertains to abandonment of applications and states "An application shall be denied without prejudice when, in the discretion of the Board, an applicant does not exercise due diligence in the completion of his or her application, in furnishing additional information or documents requested in or in the payment of any required fees."

The Board has determined one year as a reasonable amount of time to exercise due diligence in completing an application. If your application is not complete within one year, your application will be denied without prejudice.

GENERAL INFORMATION

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide, in writing, notice of any change of address to the Board. All correspondence will be sent to the address of record.

If you have elected to be represented by a recruiting and/or placement service during the application process, submit in writing to the Board your authorization for all correspondence to be forwarded to the representing agency. Please be advised that all correspondence from the Board will be directed to the representing agency (i.e. written or verbal inquiries pertinent to the status of your application.)

The examination fees are only refundable prior to being scheduled for the examinations or in the event your application is denied. The application and fingerprint card processing fees are **non-refundable**.

After completing the application, including attaching your photograph, signing the application for licensure, (if applicable completing the FSBPT scannable application) submit the application(s) with all necessary supporting documents and fees to: Physical Therapy Board of California, 1418 Howe Avenue, Suite 16, Sacramento, CA 95825-3204. Personal checks or money orders should be payable to the Physical Therapy Board of California.

CHECKS RETURNED UNPAID BY YOUR BANK, DUE TO A STOP PAYMENT ORDER OR DUE TO A CLOSED ACCOUNT, WILL BE CONSIDERED A WITHDRAWAL OF YOUR APPLICATION. ALL FEES FOR WHICH THE RETURNED CHECK IS IN PAYMENT OF, PLUS A RETURNED CHECK FEE OF \$10.00, MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO THE REVIEW OF A NEW APPLICATION.

The following are the requirements for applying to take the physical therapy assistant examination by equivalency, per Section 1398.47 Equivalent Training or Experience.

(a) Training and experience considered equivalent to that obtained in an approved physical therapist assistant school shall be acquired in one of the following ways:

(1) Military training, consisting of satisfactory completion of a basic hospital corps member course and of a formal physical therapist assistant course that includes a minimum of 550 hours of technical courses relating to physical therapy, and 350 hours of supervised clinical experience. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c). The applicant shall have obtained a grade of “C” or better in all formal coursework to be accepted for approval as a physical therapist assistant.

(2) A combination of training and 36 months of full-time work experience in physical therapy described in subsection (b). Training shall consist of satisfactory completion of 30 semester units or 40 quarter units of instruction in a variety of the following technical areas: Human anatomy and physiology, including laboratory experience; kinesiology and topographical anatomy; first-aid; basic principles of electromagnetism, mechanics and thermodynamics, biomechanics, and massage; application of therapeutic exercise and modalities for the physically disabled; survey of pathophysiological conditions resulting from injury or disease; ethics; and laws relating to physical therapy. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c). The application shall have obtained a grade of “c” or better in all technical coursework to be accepted for approval as a physical therapist assistant. 18 months of the work experience shall be in providing patient related tasks under the orders, direction and immediate supervision of a physical therapist in an acute care inpatient facility.

(3) Sixty (60) months of full-time work experience in physical therapy described in subsection (b). 30 months of the work experience shall be in providing patient related tasks under the order, direction and immediate supervision of a physical therapist in an acute care inpatient facility. In addition, the applicant shall complete the general education requirements described in subsection (c).

(4) Successful completion of professional education described in subdivisions (b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(5), and (b)(8) of Section 2650 of the code and of the general education requirements described in subsection (c).

(b) Work experience used to satisfy subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3), shall be obtained under the orders, direction and immediate supervision of (1) a physical therapist licensed by the Board, (2) a physical therapist employed by the United States Government, or (3) an out-of-state licensed physical therapist who has qualifications equivalent to a physical therapist licensed by the Board, and shall consist of assisting the supervising physical therapist in the treatment of patients of both sexes, varying ages and disabilities. Full-time work experience shall be credited on the basis of a compensated 40-hour work week, allowing for the usual and customary periods of absence. Work credit shall be given for part-time employment. The work experience shall have been obtained within ten years of the date the application for approval is filed with the Board, provided that, one-half of the experience has been obtained within five years of the application.

(c) General education requirements shall consist of satisfactory completion of 15 semester units or 20 quarter units, including at least one course in each of the following areas:

- (1) Natural sciences.
- (2) Social or behavioral sciences.
- (3) Humanities.
- (4) English, speech, or mathematics.

Completion of a course in English composition which meets the Associates or Bachelor of Arts degree requirement of the college at which the course is taken, is required as part of the general education requirement, except that this subject shall not be required of those applicants who are foreign trained.

(d) Proof of completion of the general education courses in subsection (c) and of the technical courses in subsection (a)(2) shall be submitted on an official transcript. The courses may be taken at any post-secondary institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education. Credit will be given for academic units given by the educational institution for equivalent experience or education as well as for the results of equivalency or proficiency examinations.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 2615 and 2655.11, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 2655.3, Business and Professions Code.

WORK STATUS :

PHYSICAL THERAPIST LICENSE APPLICANT STATUS

2636.5(c) APPLICANTS APPLYING BY ENDORSEMENT

An applicant who has filed a physical therapy application under this section with the Board may, between the date of receipt of notice that his or her application is on file and the date of receipt of his or her license, perform as a physical therapist under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed in this state.

During this period the applicant shall identify himself or herself only as a "physical therapist license applicant." If the applicant under this section does not qualify and receive a license as provided in this section and does not qualify under Section 2639 all privileges under this section shall terminate upon notice by certified mail, return receipt requested. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist license applicant.

2640 GRADUATE PRACTICE

(a) If the Board uses computer administered testing for the administration of the licensing examination, this section shall apply and Section 2639 shall not apply.

(b) Every graduate of an approved physical therapist education program who has filed a complete application for licensure with the committee for the first time may, following receipt of a letter of authorization to take the licensing examination and perform as a "physical therapist licensed applicant," perform as a physical therapist under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed in this state, for 90 days pending the results of the first licensing examination administered. During this period, the applicant shall identify himself or herself only as a "physical therapist license applicant." If the applicant passes the examination, the physical therapist license applicant status shall remain in effect until a regular renewable license is issued, or licensure is denied, by the Board.

(c) A person shall not be considered a graduate unless he or she has successfully completed all the clinical training and internships required for graduation from the program.

(d) If the applicant fails to take the examination within 90 days or fails to pass the examination or receive a license, all privileges under this section shall terminate. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist license applicant.

SUPERVISION OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST LICENSE APPLICANT

A physical therapist license applicant whose application for licensure has been filed and reviewed by the Board may perform as a physical therapist if he or she is under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed by the board. "Direct and immediate supervision" means a supervisor shall at all times be responsible for and provide adequate supervision of the work performed by the graduate and shall be in close proximity to the location where the graduate is rendering physical therapy treatment.

FOREIGN EDUCATED WORK STATUS

Prior to passing the examination, foreign educated physical therapists can be employed as a physical therapy aide, per section 1399 of the California Code of Regulations.

After passing the examination, while completing the required period of clinical service in an approved facility, the applicant shall be identified as a "physical therapy license applicant" per section 2653(a)(3) of the Business and Professions Code.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT APPLICANT STATUS

2655.71(b) APPLICANTS APPLYING BY ENDORSEMENT

An applicant who has filed a physical therapist assistant application for the first time may assist in the provision of physical therapy in accordance with Section 2655.91.

2655.93 GRADUATE PRACTICE

(a) If the Board uses computer administered testing for the administration of the examination, this section shall apply and Section 2655.91 shall not apply.

(b) Every graduate of an approved physical therapist assistant education program who has filed a complete application with the committee for the first time, may following receipt of a letter of authorization to take the examination and perform as a "physical therapist assistant applicant," assist in the provision of physical therapy under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed in this state, for 90 days pending the results of the first examination administered. During this period, the applicant shall identify himself or herself only as a "physical therapist assistant applicant." If the applicant passes the examination, the physical therapist assistant applicant status shall remain in effect until a regular renewable approval is issued, or approval is denied, by the committee.

(c) A person shall not be considered a graduate unless he or she has successfully completed all the clinical training and internships required for graduation from the program.

(d) If the applicant fails to take the examination within 90 days or fails to pass the examination or receive approval, all privileges under this section shall terminate. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist assistant applicant.

SUPERVISION OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT APPLICANT

A physical therapist assistant applicant whose application for approval has been filed and reviewed by the committee may assist in the provision of physical therapy services if he or she is under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed by the board. "Direct and immediate" means a supervisor shall at all times be responsible for and provide adequate supervision of the work performed by the applicant and shall be in close proximity to the location where the applicant is assisting in the provision of physical therapy treatment.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT EQUIVALENCY

You are **NOT** authorized to work as a physical therapist assistant applicant. You may work as a physical therapy aide as defined in the Requirements for the Use of Physical Therapy Aides in Section 1399 of the Physical Therapy Practice Act.

ARTICLE 6. PHYSICAL THERAPY AIDES

1399. REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF AIDES.

A physical therapy aide is an unlicensed person who assists a physical therapist and may be utilized by a physical therapist in his or her practice by performing nonpatient related tasks, or by performing patient related tasks.

(a) As used in these regulations:

(1) A "patient related task" means a physical therapy service rendered directly to the patient by an aide, excluding nonpatient related tasks as defined below.

(2) A "nonpatient related task" means a task related to observation of the patient, transport of patients, physical support only during gait or transfer training, housekeeping duties, clerical duties and similar functions.

(b) "Under the orders, direction and immediate supervision" means:

(1) Prior to the initiation of care, the physical therapist shall evaluate every patient prior to the performance of any patient related tasks by the aide. The evaluation shall be documented in the patient's record.

(2) The physical therapist shall formulate and record in the patient's record a treatment program based upon the evaluation and any other information available to the physical therapist, and shall determine those patient related tasks which may be assigned to an aide. The patient's record shall reflect those patient related tasks that were rendered by the aide, including the signature of the aide who performed those tasks.

(3) The physical therapist shall assign only those patient related tasks that can be safely and effectively performed by the aide. The supervising physical therapist shall be responsible at all times for the conduct of the aide while he or she is on duty.

(4) The physical therapist shall provide continuous and immediate supervision of the aide. The physical therapist shall be in the same facility as and in immediate proximity to the location where the aide is performing patient related tasks, and shall be readily available at all times to provide advice or instruction to the aide. When patient related tasks are provided a patient by an aide the supervising physical therapist shall at some point during the treatment day provide direct service to the patient as treatment for the patient's condition or to further evaluate and monitor the patient's progress, and so document in the patient's record.

(5) The physical therapist shall perform periodic re-evaluation of the patient as necessary and make adjustments in the patient's treatment program. The re-evaluation shall be documented in the patient's record.

(6) The supervising physical therapist shall countersign with their first initial and last name, and date all entries in the patient's record, on the same day as patient related tasks were provided by the aide.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 2615, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 2630, Business and Professions Code.

1399.1 LIMITATION ON AIDES UTILIZED

A physical therapist shall not supervise more than one aide at any one time performing patient related tasks.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 2615, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 2630, Business and Professions Code.

STATUS OF YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED OVER THE TELEPHONE